

## **Kerala**

### **‘Thelima’: School Children on Sanitation, Health, and Hygiene Education**

‘Thelima’ is an activity-oriented workbook for school children on school sanitation, health, and hygiene education within the framework of the TSC that was used in the curriculum. It was initiated by Suchitwa Mission and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Kerala, as part of a program on School Sanitation for developing a healthy society focusing on children. Suchitwa Mission and SSA, Kerala, jointly prepared the workbook. The content of ‘Thelima’ is designed to fit with various chapters of the prescribed curriculum of Classes V-IX and was published during academic year 2009-10. The chapters are titled: 1. I am clean; 2. Water is precious; 3. Pollution—a great menace; 4. Myself and my friends; and 5. Our safety in our hands. The thematic presentations of the workbook center on the topics mentioned earlier with simulated discussions, topics for school projects and experiments, knowledge dissemination, as well as activities for attitudinal change and for developing skills. It can be used as a handbook for teachers and as a calendar of activities for students.

### **The Objectives**

- Generate and develop health and hygienic values among children.
- Create an environment for the sustainability of achievements in health and sanitation.
- Motivate children to embrace attitudinal changes.
- Create awareness among children about the protection and proper utilization of natural resources.
- Impart some skills with respect to the related themes.

### **Initiation**

The program was initiated by the Government of Kerala in June 2009 while planning a unique strategy for School Sanitation. The state government’s Suchitwa Mission conceptualized the idea and developed the workbook in association with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and other resources available in the state. Developing the content was a collaborative effort involving officials and staff in the Department of Rural Development, the faculties of SSA, the Department of Community

Medicine, the Government Medical College, TVPM, and NGOs working in the field of health and sanitation. The Department of Local SelfGovernment (Rural Development) and the Department of Education supported this initiative.

**Important steps of the process are:**

- Idea germination at Suchitwa Mission.
- Primary consultation with SSA.
- Discussion between the Minister for LSGD and Minister of Education and policy agreement for a collaborative effort to develop such a work group.
- Government decisions and approvals.
- Formation of a core group consisting of officials in the Department of Rural Development, the Faculties of SSA, the Department of Community Medicine, the Government Medical College, TVPM, and NGOs working in the field of health and sanitation.
- Theme identification workshop.
- Identification of core faculties to develop and prepare the workbook based on core group decisions.
- Workbook preparation workshop.
- Dissemination workshop for master trainers of SSA.
- Final approval of content.
- Printing of the workbook and circulating to government schools.
- Teachers and children in Classes V-IX use the workbook as part of curriculum activities.

The program was implemented by the Education Department under the leadership of SSA and CCDU. The Government of Kerala provided workbooks for all children in Classes V–IV for the academic year 2009–10. A group of master trainers was developed at the state level to train the teachers of all schools at the district/block level on implementation of the activity. The trained teachers implemented this activity at the school level.

The program focused in particular on school students from Std. V–IX. Teachers were provided the training necessary for implementing the program. Suchitwa Sena, including teachers and students, were formed in schools. This program primarily benefits students, but the society as a whole gains in the process.

## **Suitability of the Initiative**

The ‘Thelima’ workbook has been used in schools for the last two years. Training has been imparted to teachers for implementing the program and it is being regularly monitored by SSA.

## **Scale of the Activity**

The program is being implemented in schools all over the state, which have started to include this handbook in their curriculum. Taking the demand from English medium schools into account, efforts have been made to develop a similar English version of the work. There is scope to prepare such workbooks for use all over the nation in various local languages.

‘Thelima’ has been integrated into the school curriculum to ‘catch students while they are young’ with the objective of inculcating good practices in the areas of health, hygiene, and sanitation among a new generation. Since the ‘Thelima’ workbook has received government approval, its implementation and the dissemination of its core content does not require any additional effort on the part of users. Hence it is a value-added effort in the field of capacity development.

## **Key Factors Behind this Best Practice**

- Political decision for a collaborative effort by two departments.
- Effective consultations.
- Joint intellectual contributions by a team of officials, faculties, and practitioners in the field.
- Ownership by the implementing department (Education).
- Content connects to related topics in textbooks, allowing students to correlate and think in an integrated manner.

## **Lessons Learnt**

- School health and hygiene education will be successful if they are integrated into the curriculum.
- Quality materials are needed to support the program.
- Effective coordination and convergence elicit the best outcomes.

## **Other Aspects**

In addition to books, soft copies of the materials were made available in electronic form to all the schools and master trainers, which was found to be very useful for training and orientation purposes. The Government of Kerala has commissioned a study by an independent agency to evaluate the impact and usefulness of the initiative overall. (*Source : MDWS*)

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